

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****Statement of Chairman Bennie G. Thompson*****H.R. 4842, the “Homeland Security Science and Technology Authorization Act of 2010”***

April 15, 2010 (Washington) – Today, Committee on Homeland Security Chairman Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS) delivered the following prepared remarks for the full Committee mark up of H.R. 4842, the “Homeland Security Science and Technology Authorization Act of 2010”:

“From screening technologies to first responder equipment, S&T is at the forefront of efforts to develop novel approaches and technologies to respond to some of the most vexing homeland security challenges.

H.R. 4842—which is the product of over nine months of bipartisan work— represents a milestone for the S&T Directorate and this Committee. It is the first authorization bill for S&T since the Department created in 2002. Chairwoman Clarke and Ranking Member Lungren are to be commended for producing this fine piece of legislation.

Through years of oversight work, this Committee has a great appreciation for not only S&T’s strengths and successes but also its weaknesses. The main weaknesses, according to many observers, have been a lack of accessibility, transparency, and responsiveness. I am pleased that Dr. Tara O’Toole has indicated a willingness to address these weaknesses that have impeded S&T from realizing its full potential.

For our part, with this bill, we will put S&T on the path to fulfilling its potential by not only providing roughly \$2.27 billion in resources over the next two years but also requiring:

- a strategic plan;
- management reforms; and
- streamlined processes to drive its research activities in a manner that is responsive to its customers—TSA, CBP, Coast Guard and the other DHS components as well as first responders.

I cannot tell you how many times I have been approached by a company with a novel homeland security technology that has been frustrated by how difficult it is to work with S&T. We have to make it easier for innovative firms—especially the small businesses-- to do business with S&T.

This bill does just that by authorizing an Office of Public-Private Partnerships to do outreach to the business community about opportunities to work with S&T. Further, within that Office, the bill creates a new “Rapid Review Division” to evaluate and provide feedback on unsolicited scientific proposals within 60 days of submission. Those proposals that are deemed “promising” by the Office are then forwarded to either S&T’s research arm or a DHS component for further consideration. Creation of this Office will address quite possibly the single biggest criticism of S&T by making it accessible, transparent, and responsive.

H.R. 4842 also addresses the single biggest obstacle to homeland security technology innovation – access to capital. Specifically, it requires to Secretary to review DoD’s venture capital programs and develop a model for DHS.

To make S&T more accountable, H.R. 4842 requires S&T to make risk-based decisions about allocating its research funding. Additionally, it authorizes important programs within S&T and its sister component—the Domestic Nuclear Detection Office (DNDO) including--

- A requirement that the process for identified, prioritized, and funded research and

- development be institutionalized;
- New training for all DHS personnel that are involved in writing technology requirements;
- A doubling of DHS' cybersecurity R&D budget; and
- Affirmation of support for University Programs, including minority-serving institutions.”

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